



A Fantastic Finale for the Special Olympics after a weekend of competitions

Over 200 athletes played hard and gave their all during the fifth anniversary of the Aruba Special Olympics that took place over this past weekend. Three intense days of competition in dozens of events gave the special athletes of Aruba, Bonaire, Curacao, and St. Martaan the opportunity to show their determination and will to win. Though the home team from Aruba dominated the winning of gold medals, a surprising number from the small delegation from St. Martaan, competing in Aruba for the first time took first place in various events, particularly track and field.

Sunday night's farewell party in the gardens of the Epilicious dining room of the EPI Hospitality Center was the most elegant affair these games have ever seen. Beautifully executed by the staff and students of the EPI; the evening was donated to the Foundation for the Special Olympics and the Aruban and visiting athletes could celebrate the fifth anniversary of this event in style. There was fabulous native dancing by the groups Flash and Pireweetje, and afterwards all the gathering danced to the music of the Chapo Great Band.

A central part of the night was the awarding of medallions of achievement for all the athletes by Gerry Frans, president of the Aruba Sports Unions, or ASU. This organization is devoted to the promotion and recognition of achievement in all athletic pursuits. Even those that did not receive a gold, silver or bronze in the competitions, took home a medal for their effort and determination, which they can wear with pride. The Aruba Special Olympics is a stirring event for not only the competitors, but also all those that take part. Tuyó Werleman, Director of the SVGA, the Foundation for the Mentally Challenged wishes to thank the EPI Hospitality Center, and Digicel, the event's main sponsor, plus the many others organizations and individuals that contributed meals, goods, funds, and services towards the success of the Special Olympics. A special thanks to the students of the EPB School and the International School of Aruba for their participation and assistance in the annual games, supervising the athletes.

These games are recognized as an important element in contributing to the continued development of the participants; the building of self-esteem, and the recognition that they can accomplish whatever they set their minds out to do. It is the mission of the SVGA to assist their clients in becoming a part of the mainstream society, and towards this goal, the Special Olympics has significant impact.